

Open Letter

Professor Eeva Leinonen
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Dear Professor Leinonen

We write to voice our deep concern at the legal action by way of cross-claim for damages recently taken by Murdoch University against Associate Professor Gerd Schröder-Turk as reported in the news media. We are not close associates of Associate Professor Schröder-Turk. Our concern is that the claim for damages sets dangerous precedent for all Australian universities.

It is a long-established principle of academic freedom that academics must be able to criticise university governance. This right is especially important where aspects of university governance might compromise the integrity of teaching and research.

Protecting academic freedom should be a core value of all Australian universities as it ensures the proper conduct of teaching and research. The claim for damages is highly intimidatory to all Australian academics and therefore risks the capacity of Murdoch University and all Australian universities to pursue excellence in research and teaching.

We urge you to withdraw the claim, to settle any dispute without punitive measures, and to affirm the commitment of Murdoch University to academic freedom as an essential university value.

Yours sincerely

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